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### THE MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL.

Not more than one hundred and thirty years ago, the roads of England were pronounced the worst in Europe, and not a single mile of canal—as canals are now understood—had been made. The wonderful growth of commerce and the industrial arts from about that time received its first and greatest impulse from the construction of the Bridgewater Canal, between Manchester and Liverpool; and Manchester may fairly claim the proud distinction of being the pioneer in opening up this country to commerce and manufactures by means of improved internal communications.

From the day on which the Bridgewater Canal was opened, the cost of carriage of goods was reduced by three-fourths, and immediately, as if by magic, the change began. The trade of Manchester and the surrounding district grew by leaps and bounds, until, instead of receiving the bulk of our supplies from the Continent, as formerly, the habitable world has been ransacked to find new markets for our productions; and within the following fifty years three thousand miles of canal were made at a cost of fifty million pounds sterling.

Fifty years after the opening of the Bridgewater Canal, Manchester entered on a second enterprise of a similar kind and for a similar purpose; and the first really successful railway was made: the pioneer of a system of iron roads surpassing all that the world has ever seen. Strangely enough, one of the principal objections to railways was, that the canals, made after so much trouble and expense, would be ruined; and it was gravely proposed by an eminent engineer to fill up the canals and convert them into railways; but the canals have more than proved that they can compete successfully with railways; and for raw material and the heavier class of goods are a far less costly means of conveyance than any other in existence.

The enormous expansion of commerce within this century has been in no small measure due

to canals. Without the means of distribution, commerce cannot exist, for facilities create trade. Until very recently, this country, from her manufacturing skill, and as the inventor and maker of the finest machinery in existence, has controlled the carrying-trade of the world, and competition outside of these islands was scarcely thought of. But we have found, somewhat to our surprise, that our competitors have been working diligently; that they have got and now make our best machines, and that their operatives work more hours in the day for much less remuneration. By more active canvassing for orders, by studying the requirements of customers, and by paying less for the carriage of goods, the foreigner, we find, is competing with us on more than favourable conditions. The English manufacturers and merchants have had to learn that not only abroad, but also in the home market, they were being undersold, and they began to inquire into the reason. In addition to the causes enumerated, it was found that the internal carrying-trade of the country was entirely monopolised by the railways, including carriage by canal; and a comprehensive Report, published by the Associated Chambers of Commerce in 1885, showed that the rates for carriage of goods in this country were on an average fully twice as much as those paid by our continental rivals.

But in addition to this keen competition, Manchester and the surrounding districts are suffering from obstructions which they have long complained of and sought to mitigate, but hitherto in vain, and which were thus characterised recently in the *Times*: ‘Five millions and a half of people are at the mercy of a combination, holding a pass between them and the rest of the human race, and making the same use of their coigns of vantage as the medieval barons did in the embattled toll-gates thrown across the world’s highways. City, port, dock, and railway vie in extortion, and levy duties to the extent of human forbearance. Many millions of tons of material and manufactures pass annually to and fro between the port and the industrious region at

the back ; and on every ton, Liverpool has its profit.' This is a heavy indictment of Liverpool ; but the fact is, in the past, and under the prosperous times long enjoyed by that port, responsibilities were accepted, reasonable enough at the time, but found to be now, under more stringent conditions, to say the least, burdensome.

Liverpool is not a manufacturing city ; she is the result of the great industrial centre behind ; but, unfortunately, owing to the responsibilities of the Mersey Dock and Harbour Board, it is impossible for that trust to make such concessions as regards their existing tariffs as will satisfy Manchester, and which that city is convinced will be secured by the Ship Canal. The railways also, with all the intermediate carriers, porters, &c., must have their profit. Mr George Findlay, Manager of the London and Northwestern Railway, stated before parliament, that out of 9s. 2d. per ton for carriage of a certain class of goods to Manchester, his Company received 1s. 9d., recently reduced to 1s. 2d., the remainder going for charges and dues in Liverpool. But whatever the cause may be, the contention of Manchester is, that goods are brought from the farthest ends of the earth to within few miles of their destination, and then the heaviest portion of the expense and delay begins. It was clearly shown, during the parliamentary inquiry into the merits of the Ship Canal, that where there is a difference of several days in the length of a voyage, no extra charge is made, even when that difference amounts to so much as ten days ; therefore it ought to cost no more for carriage by water to Manchester than it does now to Liverpool. Besides this saving, there are various other economies contemplated by the advocates of the Ship Canal scheme. As the largest vessels will be able to enter or leave the canal at any state of the tide, one of the principal causes of delay is avoided, as also the expense of 'breaking bulk' and transhipment to railways, with the risk of damage or deterioration.

There is no doubt that Manchester is amply justified in her contention that the canal will give her a new lease of prosperity, and the power to maintain her high position in the industrial world. The construction of the canal is now in progress, and is being pushed forward with great energy and vigour by the contractor, Mr Walker of London, a gentleman who has shown a rare combination of judgment and skill in the selection of plant for carrying on the work ; and by means of which it can be seen how effectually steam-machinery can be made to do work of this kind. The work has now been going on for over twelve months, and it is confidently stated that Mr Walker is well forward with the proportion of work expected to be executed within that time. The canal is to be thirty-five miles in length, and is being constructed in sections, some of which are nearly ready to be connected in such a way as will facilitate the work by

laying continuous railway tracks. There are no great engineering problems to be solved, not even such—comparing a large enterprise with a much smaller one—as Brindley had to overcome with his limited means and experience, in the making of the Bridgewater Canal last century. It is undoubtedly a gigantic undertaking, even in these days of great schemes ; yet what particularly astonishes the visitor is the absence of the large armies of men which are usually seen on great works of a similar description. On one of the sections near Manchester about twelve hundred men are employed, distributed over the section, about four miles in length, with three large docks in progress. But in place of employing manual labour for the excavations, five powerful 'steam navvies' of various nationalities can be seen at work from one place ; besides a large 'steam-dredger,' similar to what may be seen dredging at the entrances to harbours, mounted on a large truck, on rails laid along the side of the cutting. This machine is said to be the most powerful excavator in existence. It lifts and empties into a truck four cubic yards of clay every minute, and twenty trucks are filled and removed in ten minutes. The machine is continually moving forward. Steam-machinery seems to be adapted to all kinds of work, and the men are chiefly engaged in attending to it, or performing such labour as is unworthy of its attention. On all hands, steam is the universal servant : a perfect network of rails covers the ground, reminding us of a great railway terminus ; while locomotives, steam-navvies, steam-cranes, and steam-pumps at full work, present a scene of activity and energy seldom witnessed. On the different sections there are fifteen thousand horsepower at work in the various forms of steam-machinery, which will at least represent the work of one hundred thousand men ; and when we consider that the amount of material to be excavated and removed is forty-eight million cubic yards of clay and six million cubic yards of rock, the gigantic character of the undertaking will be appreciated.

But such large quantities in figures convey only an imperfect meaning of their vastness to ordinary readers ; perhaps it will be better understood by stating that the quantity named would make a wall round the earth, on the equatorial line, about six feet high and two feet thick. Up to the present time fully one million cubic yards of soil have been removed per month. It is calculated that one of the 'navvies' removes between sixty and seventy thousand cubic yards in the same time.

While agencies so powerful are in operation excavating this enormous quantity of material, we may glance at the work to be done in detail. The canal is not a very long one, being, as we have said, thirty-five miles. Its sectional dimensions will be three hundred feet wide on the surface—or nearly twice the width of the Suez

Canal; the bottom one hundred and twenty feet wide; with a depth of twenty-six feet. The starting-point is at Eastham, on the river Mersey; and the sill of the entrance dock is eleven feet below the level of the deepest dock in Liverpool, thus making the canal independent of the state of the tide. The speed of vessels passing through it is estimated at five miles per hour; and all the usual causes of delay being avoided, the largest steamer may reach Manchester while another is waiting for the tide to enter the docks in Liverpool.

On entering the tidal dock at Eastham there is a rise of twenty-two feet from low-tide by means of a lock. Twenty-two miles farther, the second lock, with a rise of sixteen feet, is reached, at Latchford. Seven miles more brings the third lock, which again lifts fourteen feet, at Irlam. Two miles, a fourth lock, fourteen feet. Old Trafford is the next lock, four miles distant, with a rise of sixteen feet, or a total height above the Mersey of sixty feet. These sections or divisions will have at each terminus three locks, parallel to each other, and of dimensions suited to the various sizes of vessels. By this means unnecessary labour and waste of compensation water will be avoided.

The canal may be almost considered one long continuous dock; and with the exception of the north bank, between Eastham and Runcorn, a distance of twelve miles, which is bounded by the Mersey, the whole of the two banks may be made available for quayage accommodation, equal to a distance of fifty-eight miles, and at any point of which vessels may be loaded or discharged. The facilities that are offered in this way are sure to draw a large number of new industries, for manufacturers are certain to seek advantageous situations. The Canal Company have very wisely secured at a moderate price a large portion of the land along both banks of the canal, chiefly with a view to this demand, and this land is certain to increase in value when the canal is completed. In this connection, greater facilities will be afforded than any mere tidal river or arm of the sea can give; and during the last few years, many large industries which have hitherto been carried on successfully in the midland counties have been removed to the coast, to secure advantages similar, though inferior, to those offered by the Ship Canal.

The docks are intended to occupy a large area, placed at different stations, but especially at Old Trafford—a suburb of Manchester—and at the Pomona Docks, which are situated near the heart of Manchester. There are three very large docks at Old Trafford, the largest of which is seventeen hundred feet long, by two hundred and fifty wide. The remaining two are smaller, and with the exception of the walls, are not far from completion. The newest and best arrangements for loading and discharging vessels will be provided. The dock walls are on such a scale as would be in

themselves a large contract. They are to be made of concrete, and will be on an average fifteen feet thick, to be faced with cement, and covered with large blocks of granite weighing several tons each. The walls will thus be practically one solid mass, several miles in length. All the walls, including those for the several locks, and the entrance dock of the river Mersey, will be constructed in the same way. The stone used in the building of the walls is nearly all obtained from the excavations at the entrance dock.

There will probably be twelve thousand men employed in a short time on the works, besides boys; and this implies a great increase in the excavating machines, as, notwithstanding the progress made in the past, the contractor is determined to push on the work with still greater speed. Mr Walker, in connection with the completion, has undertaken to pay one hundred pounds for every day that he requires after the stipulated time; and the Company on the other hand will pay him a like sum for every day he can finish the canal before the time agreed on. The Ship Canal is truly a work of great interest and importance. We have only glanced at the quantity of work to be done, besides which there are deviations of the lines of railways and of the course of rivers to be made—no small amount of work in themselves. Already there is a prospect of new canals being constructed, with improved details, connecting those districts with the Ship Canal which are at present outside of canal accommodation, all of which will serve as feeders for the main artery leading to the sea.

It is pleasing to record that Mr Walker has shown a fine spirit in dealing with his employees. At all the different sections are schools, lecture and mission halls. Social meetings and temperance lectures are held regularly. At each section a clean and well-ventilated hospital, with matrons and trained nurses, is established. Fortunately so far the work has made great progress with but very few accidents, considering the large quantity of powerful machinery in operation and the inexperience of the men at the beginning of the work.

A great deal of the opposition to the canal scheme arose from want of a clear understanding as to the basis of calculation on which is founded the prospect of its being a remunerative investment. It is quite evident that neither the Mersey Harbour Board nor the railways, bound as they are, can make such reduction on their rates and charges as will give the relief required, or as it is anticipated will be obtained from the Ship Canal. The promoters base their calculations on the present average tonnage, with charges equal to one half of what are now being paid to Liverpool and for carriage between the two cities. It is maintained that the Ship Canal, while conferring advantageous benefits on the populous centres which it will accommodate, will do so without injury to existing interests. Throughout the severe parliamentary contest, it was urged by the promoters that its operation must improve rather than prejudice the development of the port of Liverpool, and the great carrying Companies interested will have in addition the collection and distribution of the enormous traffic brought forward by the greater facilities and cheapness

offered by the Ship Canal. The effect of the creation of a new port in the most populous district and in the heart of the kingdom will be to increase new industries and enlarge commerce.

### JOHN VALE'S GUARDIAN.

#### CHAPTER VII.

HOWEVER fully Mr Robert Snelling was bent upon doing his duty by his orphan charge, he was not able to set all his benevolent machinery at once in motion. The Christmas holidays stretched a merciful interval between John and schooldays, and Uncle Robert had too righteous a fear of public opinion to begin immediately to press the boy with home lessons to such an extent as to make life an actual burden to him. The boy's state of mind was critical and curious, and Uncle Robert was not quite the man to understand it. But as no intimate knowledge of the art of watchmaking, for instance, is needed to enable any clumsy fellow to spoil for good and all the most delicate mechanism, so no great power of penetration was necessary to Snelling's plan. It was part of his method to have John a good deal on evidence, and to draw pitying attention to his mooning vacant ways.

'Upon my word,' he would say, 'I don't know what I shall make o' the lad at all. I'm sore afraid he'll never be good for much. It would ha' been a grief to his father to have seen him i' this state; and it's my belief he gets worse every day.'

He had found, dull as he was, that an ostentatious pity had more effect upon the boy than the most open bullying, and this discovery pleased him greatly. Nature played into his hands. Knowing—in spite of the hourly renewed veil of respectability which he hung between his motive and himself—what a thorough-going villainy he was bent upon, he was naturally very careful of public opinion, and it was so much safer to pity than to bully, that in a little while he gave himself wholly over to that course.

'Dear, dear!' he would say, when once he had blundered on the use of this unexpected weapon. 'It's a dreadful pity you got that knock on the head, John; I'm afraid it's made next door to a fool o' you for life.—D'ye feel it anyhow? What is it? What's it like?'

This sort of thing was doubly effective before strangers, because it threw John into a dreadful state of helpless vacancy, and at the same time helped to establish Uncle Robert's reputation for gentleness of heart, and showed how sad he was over the boy's misfortune. But Mr Snelling expected schoolmaster Macfarlane to be of great assistance to him, and looked forward anxiously to the re-opening of the school. A day or two before the time appointed for that event, his business led him by Macfarlane's residence, and he made a call upon him. 'I've called,' he said, when he had taken his seat in the schoolmaster's little parlour, 'to have a word or two about this poor young nephew of mine, Mr Macfarlane. I'm afraid as of late he has been a bit back'ard in his studies.'

'That is certainly the case, Mr Snelling,' said Macfarlane; 'but I must ask you to take into

consideration the fact that the late Mr Vale particularly desired that the boy should not be pressed forward too rapidly.'

'Please, understand,' Snelling answered with a wooden condescension, 'that I am not ab�aming you, sir. I am fully aware of Mr Vale's desire. But the youth is now in my hands, and I am desirous to see him pushed forward a little faster. I am now his guardian, and I feel the responsibility hang upon me pretty heavy.'

'That is quite natural, Mr Snelling,' returned the schoolmaster.

'I don't want to be told, sir, whether it is natural or no,' said Snelling. 'Maybe everybody would feel the responsibility as heavy as I do; maybe they would not. That, sir, is neither here nor there. The point with me is, as I do feel the responsibility, and as I desire to discharge it.'

'Exactly so,' replied Macfarlane.

Mr Snelling looked as if he would have liked to contradict him, but on reflection seemed to think better of it. 'Having had the b'y,' he proceeded heavily—'having had the b'y under my care sence a considerable while before his father's death, I have been able to come to a bit of a judgment upon his character.'

'Precisely,' said the schoolmaster.

Again Mr Snelling looked as if he would like to defy the schoolmaster, and again, not seeing his way to it, he suppressed himself. 'His father's opinion was,' he continued, his solemn drawl and decisive snap growing more solemn and more decisive, 'as the condition of the b'y's mind was such as would not bear with pressure.'

'Just so,' said Macfarlane, and this time Snelling saw his chance and stopped him.

'No, sir; it is not just so. It is not just so, nor anything like just so, if my opinion is to be took at any value.'

'If you should counsel the pursuit of another method, Mr Snelling?—'

'If I should counsel the pursuit of another method,' Snelling broke in, 'you can hear what I've got to say in case you should care to listen to it. If not, I daresay I shall be able to find a place where the lad can learn as much maybe as you could teach him.'

'I beg your pardon, Mr Snelling,' said the schoolmaster submissively; 'I simply intended to signify my general agreement with the principles you were laying down.'

'You can signify your general agreement, sir,' Mr Snelling answered with his own dull dignity, 'when you know what them principles amount to.'

Macfarlane could not afford to quarrel with his visitor, and was, indeed, as a general thing, too discreet to quarrel with people who were stronger than he was, or who could in any way be either of damage or service to him. He kept silence, therefore, and listened, smilingly attentive, whilst Snelling expounded his views.

'As a teacher of youth,' that ponderous personage continued, 'you are likely to be acquainted with the fable of the hare and the tortoise. My nephew has become a bit of a tortoise, in consequence of the smack on the side of the head he got in the meadows on Scott's Hills in the course of last summer. But that's no reason why, if he's pushed judicious—I say judicious, mind you

—he should not at the end of the year be on level terms with them that has greater advantages. If five hour at four mile an hour will enable a boy to do twenty mile, seven hour at three mile an hour will enable that same boy to do one-and-twenty mile.'

The schoolmaster made a motion of assent, and Snelling paused.

'I beg your pardon; I thought you was going to make a observation.'

'I simply intended to signify my entire agreement, Mr Snelling.'

'The boy,' pursued Mr Snelling, 'has took shelter, as a boy is apt to do, under his father's weakness. The boy—as most boys are—is inclined to take it easy, if he gets the chance. In short, sir, he has grown lazy with indulgence. That is what's mainly the matter with him; he has grown lazy with indulgence. Now, what I wish, sir, is that that theer perclivity should be conquered in him. The last words his father said to me before the coroner's inquest was held upon his body was these: "Robert," he said, "I look to you to do your duty by the boy. I know," he said, "that it is and will be a arduous task; but," he says, "I look to you to do it. I shall expect you," says he, "to be a second father to him, and I repose full confidence in you."

—Now, sir,' continued Mr Snelling, with a bullying air, 'I intend to be worthy of them words, and to do my duty in the spirit as it was confided to me. I desire John to be pushed forrad, and though I shan't ask you to exercise any undoo severity, I shall look for results from this here conversation.'

He was so portentously slow, that Macfarlane, who was glib of speech and warm of temperament, felt inclined to hurry him. 'I grasp your idea, sir,' he said when he was quite sure that his visitor had finished, 'and I will do my best to carry out your instructions. I have had backward boys in my charge before to-day, Mr Snelling, and I think I may say that I have been tolerably successful with them.'

'We shall see, sir,' returned Snelling—'we shall see. You will find him inclined to wander, and you may be took in by that, as I was took in by it, unless you are forewarned. He has been allowed to wander, and that's wheer the mischief has come in. His mind must be kep' upon his task; he must be shown as he will not be allowed to wander.'

'I will bear your instructions in mind, Mr Snelling,' said the schoolmaster. 'I have observed that tendency in John.' He took a retrospective look. 'I have observed that tendency, and but that his father's instructions were emphatically towards leniency—I may say towards indulgence—I think I should have been able to correct it.'

Mr Macfarlane was a survival, and not a very late survival either, of those days when a man who had failed in every other walk of life was still held good enough to be a schoolmaster. There was not a country town in England at that time which did not own one pedagogue to whose care the welfare of a score or two of boys was confided, without his having either special training or special learning or special temper. A brass plate and a prospectus were stock-in-trade enough to start with; and if the

man who displayed these essentials to the world had not the others, they were supposed perhaps to come with practice, or perhaps their presence or absence was not supposed to matter much. Macfarlane wrote a copper-plate hand, spelled accurately, and was dreadfully distinct and anxious about his aspirates, so that he passed with the easy-going Castle-Barfield folk not merely as a scholar but a person of high-breeding. When a man not only breathed hard on 'him' and 'whom,' but was actually compelled by his sense of responsibility to the language to wedge a laborious aspirate into 'we-heelbarrow,' it was evident that he was a person of no common training. The homely folks would have felt that in anybody but a schoolmaster a care so constant would have something too much of a reprobation for common people who had something more than their *hs* to think about; but in a preceptor of youth it was excellent, and gave him just that happy difference from other men which a white tie gave the parson.

Whether the idea were born with him, or inspired into him, or whether it grew merely as a result of habit and custom, and was confirmed by experience, Macfarlane's educational fetish was the bamboo cane. Without bodily suffering, he really did not see how boys were to learn anything. He was quite honest in this belief, as many worthier men than he had been before him; and since he was so, it was well for him, if not for the urchins who lived beneath his rule, that he felt as much pleasure in inflicting punishment as some men do in spreading happiness. The enjoyment of other people's pain is like the habit of dram-drinking or opium-taking—it grows with practice, and nature demands an increasing dose. The schoolmaster had enjoyed twenty years of arbitrary power, and to make some young soul wretched, or some young body to smart and tingle, had grown into a daily necessity with him. 'To have at the back of his keenest relish a firm and rooted belief that he was doing an imperative duty whilst he enjoyed himself, was delightful.

All that Snelling knew or cared about him was that he was a strict disciplinarian, who, being led to suspect that a boy shammed dullness, would be likely to be hard with him. For his own part, he had said nothing that the most affectionate and dutiful of uncles and guardians might not have said of a child whom he wished well from the bottom of his heart; but turning over the theme in his dull mind, he thought he saw a chance of protecting himself against possible suspicion, and took it, not without some inward tremors.

'You see, sir,' he said to Macfarlane, 'theer's a thing that lays a extry anxiety upon my shoulders. This boy is heir to a very considerable property, and I am his sole guardian. I am his sole relative; and if his education should be neglected, and he should live to grow up as soft as he is now, theer's them in Castle-Barfield as is quite low enough in their minds to say as I neglected him with a eye to my own interest. Theerfore, I feel it needful to be severe with him, and to push him forrad harder than I should do.'

'I think I may say,' replied Macfarlane, rising as his visitor rose, and escorting him to the

door, 'that I fully appreciate your anxiety. The boy needs a firm hand.'

'That is what he needs,' said Snelling—'a firm hand.'

'He will find it here, Mr Snelling; he will find it here.—Good-morning, Mr Snelling.'

It happened that John went to school at the opening day of the new year's business there in unusually good spirits, and that he joined in a romp with his schoolfellows with something of his old abandon and jollity. Macfarlane, tying on his black satin stock at a bedroom window which overlooked the playground, observed this, and stored it up for use. It is not doing the good man any injustice to admit that he felt eager to begin the cultivation of his patch of boyhood, or to acknowledge that he resolved that if the bamboo had anything to say to it, John should advance as rapidly as his comrades. The bamboo was not the end, but only the means of culture, a plough which prepared the ground for the reception of the seed of learning. Tickle the boy with bamboo, and he laughed with a harvest of verbs and moods and tenses.

Above the awful desk of state at which he sat, Macfarlane had a board which moved upon a hinge. It bore on one side the word 'Work,' and on the other the word 'Leisure,' each legibly printed in black letters on a white ground. It displayed one side or the other in obedience to the tug of a cord which lay within easy reach of the schoolmaster's hand, and either in rising or falling it struck a circular spring from which a bell was suspended. The bell rang, and dead silence or wild clamour of tongues succeeded.

The boys were already marshalled to their desks when the master entered, and took his customary place amidst a deafening hubbub. The cord was pulled, the bell rang, the board showed the dire legend 'Work,' and the labours of the schoolboy year began.

'You may have heard, boys,' said Mr Macfarlane, who, bereft of authority during the month of holiday, and forced to abdicate from his throne, felt all the happier on coming back again, and was gifted at such times with a dreadful jocularity—'you may have heard, boys, that it is a practice amongst Her Majesty's judges, when they visit a town at which criminals are ordinarily brought before them to be tried, and when, contrary to the general rule, they find that no breach of the laws has been committed, to assume a pair of white gloves. Now, I should very much like at the end of the present session to be able to assume a pair of white gloves myself. I should be proud and pleased if for once in my dealings with you I should find it unnecessary to inflict punishment upon one of your number.—Crowther! stand up, sir! What do you mean, sir, by those hideous contortions?'

'Kenrick's put a pen in my ear, sir, if you please, and I can't get it out, sir.'

'Indeed,' said Mr Macfarlane. 'Thus early in the history of the half-year—even upon its threshold, I find my hopes dashed to the ground.—Kenrick, I will ask you to be good enough to report yourself to me after morning school-hours. These little ebullitions of holiday feeling must be checked, Kenrick; they must be checked, Kenrick, and you may rely upon it that they

shall be checked, and sternly. There is always one misdeemeanant who must be the first to suffer in any half-year of work upon which we may enter, and you, Kenrick, have promoted yourself to that bad eminence.'

Being thus early assured of any fear he may have had of getting out of practice, Mr Macfarlane descended from his desk and marched among his forces, and every boy who felt him hovering over his shoulder would have run for shelter, as chickens run from the shadow of a hawk, if he had had any protecting wing to fly to. The laborious tongue which followed the up and down stroke was withdrawn from sight—for it was a playful trick of Mr Macfarlane's to chuck the chins of offenders in this respect—and the pen faltered woefully under that cruel eye. The passing shadow of the master's presence scared the toiler at the rule of three, and shook with polar chills and equatorial burnings the student of geography.

What a blessing it is that the memory of a boy is so short, and the memories of men are so illusive! Men reared under the cruellest training look back to their youthful days with kindness, and remember even their tyrants with no bitterness of heart. It is well for the world at large that this is so; but it is none the better for the tyrants, but rather the worse, for it is well for no man to escape the just punishment of his offences. There are fewer impostors in the noble scholastic realm than used to walk there. There are fewer rages in innocent helpless hearts, and fewer and less bitter tears shed by childish eyes, than in those bad old days, but the tears are remembered somewhere, and the provoked offences of the innocent are not forgotten. And there are still professors enough of the harsh school to make it worth while to ask how much the better they are for the heart-hardening regimen which made their childhood bitter.

Mr Macfarlane was a dutiful man, and had had young John especially recommended to his faithful care. Poor John had forgotten what his elder very well remembered; they had parted with bad blood between them, and only the accident of his being called away from school had saved John from a flogging for that hysterical sacrilegious laugh when Jenvey had given his mad denial to the schoolmaster's pet formula.

In the course of his strolls hither and thither, Macfarlane kept his eye upon his specially recommended pupil. The specially recommended pupil was apparently diligent, and was seated with his head in both hands and his eyes bent upon his book.

'Vale,' said the schoolmaster, coming up with him and laying a hand upon his shoulder, 'your uncle is very little pleased with the progress you have been making, and I have promised to devote particular attention to your studies. Little birds that can sing and will not sing will have to be made to sing. I shall have to see that you keep full pace with your comrades. You have had ample consideration on account of your accident, and you will now begin in earnest. You understand me, sir?'

'Yes, sir,' John answered.

'It will be well for you if you do,' Macfarlane responded, 'for I shall visit severely any tendency I may observe in you to shirk your lessons.'

At this the wheel began to turn in John's head, but he made shift to answer: 'I beg your pardon, sir. I'll try; but I'm afraid I can't learn as fast as the other boys. It makes my head turn, if you please, sir; it's turning now.'

'I have no doubt,' replied Macfarlane, with a relish how much superior to that he would have got out of a retort to a creature of an equal size!—'I have no doubt we shall make it turn to some purpose before we have done with it.'

It began to turn to some purpose now, and turned so industriously that John sat in a sick whirl until it came to his turn to be examined, by which time his mind was as blank as Sahara, and Mr Macfarlane found it necessary to test the stimulative powers of the bamboo. But weeds of confusion and tares of helplessly rebellious pain were all that grew beneath it, and the end of the first day found the boy sullenly empty.

'The lad's head's a waste,' said Uncle Robert to Isaiah that evening. 'I'm sore afraid he'll never come to be anything but a fool as long as theer's breath in his body.'

He thought in his heart what an able unconscious ally Macfarlane was likely to be, and looked over his cousin John's accounts later in the evening with an enjoying relish.

#### THE FINDING OF 'CRUSOE'

WHEN Captain Woodes Rogers, in 1708, arranged for his privateering expedition to the South Seas, he doubtless expected to encounter many strange experiences and adventures. He never imagined, however, that one incident in his celebrated voyage would be the origin of what is undoubtedly the most popular and wide-read piece of romantic fiction. It is generally allowed that Alexander Selkirk, the Scottish mariner, was the original of Defoe's immortal castaway; but it is only a few readers—comparatively speaking—who are aware of the real facts concerning the rescue of the lonely colonist. In 1712 Captain Rogers published his *Journal of a cruising voyage round the world*, and this has now been reprinted, with notes and illustrations, by Mr Robert C. Leslie, under the title of *Life Aboard a British Privateer in the Reign of Queen Anne* (London: Chapman & Hall).

It was on the 2d of August 1708 that Captain Rogers' expedition left Bristol roads, and it consisted of the *Duke*, burden about 320 tons, having 30 guns and 117 men; and the *Duchess*, burden about 260 tons, 26 guns and 108 men; both well furnished with all necessaries on board for a distant undertaking.

The Cove of Cork was reached on the 7th, and here the ships were subjected to a thorough overhaul preparatory to departing on their lengthened and adventurous enterprise. Here, also, several seamen were shipped in place of some who had come from Bristol, 'who being ordinary fellows and not fit for our employment,' were summarily dismissed. During the stay at Cork, Captain Rogers complains of his men 'continually marrying,' and mentions one instance of a match

between a Dane and an 'Irish woman,' when the services of an interpreter had to be called in. In this case the parting was a sad one, 'the fellow continued melancholy for several days after we were at sea,' while the others parted in the best of spirits on either side.

The ships' companies included several who had already seen service in the same kind of expeditions, notably 'William Dampier, pilot for the South Seas, who had been already three times there, and twice round the world;' and some others of the famous Captain Dampier's crews and officers. The crews numbered in all 333 men, and at the best were a somewhat 'mixed multitude,' as the narrator informs us there were included 'tinkers, tailors, haymakers, peddlers, fiddlers, &c., one negro, and about ten boys. With this mixed gang we hoped to be well manned, as soon as they had learnt the use of arms and got their sea-legs, which we doubted not soon to teach 'em, and bring them to discipline.'

We quote this merely to show the difficulties these old explorers had to contend with, and as an instance of the daring shown in attempting these adventurous and dangerous expeditions. The officers were double the number usually carried, in order to provide for casualties and probable mutinies.

On September 1st, the expedition at last departed in company with some other vessels bound to foreign parts; but on the 6th, Captain Rogers parted company with the rest of the fleet, and set sail for Madeira. Here it was intended to lay in a supply of wines, as 'our men were but meanly clad, yet good liquor to sailors is preferable to clothing!' Difficulties with the motley crews were soon apparent. A mutiny broke out on the 11th because they were not permitted to plunder a Swedish barque they overhauled. This was speedily suppressed, and the ringleaders punished. On the 18th they made their first prize off Grand Canary; this was a small Spanish ship with forty-five passengers on board, including four 'fryars.' One of the latter, we are told, was 'a good honest old fellow,' who waxed merry drinking King Charles III.'s health; 'but the rest were of the wrong sort.' Abstainers were evidently not approved of in those days. The wine and brandy on board were confiscated; and on arrival at Orotava, negotiations for the ransom of the barque and prisoners were with some difficulty arranged, and the expedition continued its course.

The equator was crossed a few days later, and the usual dues paid to Neptune by the novices. About sixty of the crew were ducked three times overboard, others preferring to pay a fine of half-a-crown. This ducking 'proved of great use to our fresh-water sailors, to recover the colour of their skins, which were grown very black and nasty.'

We have not space to follow the various fortunes of the expedition, so will hurry on to the more immediate subject of this article.

After touching at St Vincent and one or two other places, the coast of Brazil was reached, and Captain Rogers enters upon a lengthy disquisition on that country and its history. Nothing very important transpired for the next few weeks.

Cape Horn was safely doubled, and on January 15th, 1709, the ships entered the South Sea. Several of the men were now suffering from scurvy, and it was determined to make with all speed for the island of Juan Fernandez. Of its exact position, however, they were unaware, none of their charts agreeing as to its latitude or longitude, and being a small island, they were in great fears they might miss it. Their usual luck did not in this instance desert them, and on January 31st, at seven o'clock in the morning, they made the island, on which they found Alexander Selkirk. We think it best to give the account of Selkirk's rescue in the pithy and quaint language of Captain Woodes Rogers himself :

*February 1.*—About two yesterday in the afternoon we hoisted our pinnace out; Captain Dover with the boat's crew went in her to go ashore, tho' we could not be less than four leagues off. As soon as the pinnace was gone, I went on board the *Duchess*, who admired our boat attempted going ashore at that distance from land. As soon as it was dark, we saw a light ashore; our boat was then about a league from the island, and bore away for the ships as soon as she saw the lights. We put out lights aboard for the boat, tho' some were of opinion the lights we saw were our boat's lights; but as night came on, it appeared too large for that. We fired our quarter-deck gun and several muskets, showing lights in our mizzen and fore-shrouds, that our boat might find us, whilst we plied in the lee of the island. About two in the morning our boat came on board; we were glad they got well off, because it began to blow. We were all convinced the light is on the shore, and design to make our ships ready to engage, believing them to be French ships at anchor, and we must either fight 'em or want water, &c.

*Febr. 2.*—We stood along the south end of the island in order to lay in with the first southerly wind, which Captain Dampier told us generally blows there all day long. The flaws came heavy off the shore, and we were forced to reef our topsails when we opened the middle bay where we expected to find our enemy, but saw all clear, and saw no ships in that nor the other bays. We guessed there had been ships there, but that they were gone on sight of us. We sent our yawl ashore about noon, with Captain Dover, Mr Frye, and six men all armed. Our boat did not return, so we sent our pinnace with the men armed, to see what was the occasion of the yawl's stay; for we were afraid that the Spaniards had a garrison there, and might have seized them. We put out a signal for our boat, and the *Duchess* showed a French ensign. Immediately our pinnace returned from the shore, and brought abundance of crawfish, with a man clothed in goatskins, who looked wilder than the first owners of them. He had been on the island four years and four months, being left there by Capt. Stradling in the *Cinque-Ports*. His name was Alexander Selkirk, a Scotch man, who had been Master of the *Cinque-Ports*, a ship that came here last with Capt. Dampier, who told me that this was the best man in her; so I immediately agreed with him to be a mate on board our ship. 'Twas he that made the fire last night when he

saw our ships, which he judged to be English. During his stay here, he saw several ships pass by, but only two came in to anchor. As he went to view 'em, he found 'em to be Spaniards, and retired from 'em; upon which they shot at him. Had they been French, he would have submitted; but chose to risk his dying alone on the island rather than fall into the hands of the Spaniards in these parts, because he apprehended they would murder him, or make a slave of him in the mines, for he feared they would spare no stranger that might be capable of discovering the South Sea. The Spaniards had landed before he knew what they were, and they came so near him that he had much ado to escape; for they not only shot at him, but pursued him into the woods, where he climbed to the top of a tree, where they halted and killed several goats just by, but went off again without discovering him. He told us that he was born at Largo, in the county of Fife, in Scotland, and was bred a sailor from his youth. The reason of his being left here was a difference betwixt him and his captain; which, together with the ships being leaky, made him willing rather to stay here than go along with him at first; and when he was at last willing, the captain would not receive him. He had been in the island before to wood and water, when two of the ship's company were left upon it for six months till the ship returned, being chased thence by two French South Sea ships. [From this it will be seen that Selkirk was not the first involuntary inhabitant of Juan Fernandez.]

He had with him his clothes and bedding, with a firelock, some powder, bullets, and tobacco, a hatchet, a knife, a kettle, a Bible, some practical pieces, and his mathematical instruments and books. He diverted and provided for himself as well as he could; but for the first eight months had much ado to bear up against melancholy, and the terror of being left alone in such a desolate place. He built two huts with pimento trees, covered them with long grass, and lined them with the skins of goats, which he killed with his gun as he wanted, so long as his powder lasted, which was but a pound; and that being near spent, he got fire by rubbing two sticks of pimento wood together upon his knee. In the lesser hut, at some distance from the other, he dressed his victuals, and in the larger he slept and employed himself in reading, singing psalms, and praying; so that he said he was a better Christian while in this solitude than ever he was before, or than, he was afraid, he should ever be again. At first he never ate anything till hunger constrained him, partly for grief, and partly for want of bread and salt; nor did he go to bed till he could watch no longer; the pimento wood, which burnt very clear, served him both for firing and candle, and refreshed him with its pleasant smell.

He might have had fish enough, but could not eat 'em for want of salt, except crawfish, which are there as large as lobsters, and very good. These he sometimes boiled, and at others broiled, as he did his goats' flesh, of which he made very good broth, for they are not so rank as ours. He kept an account of five hundred that he killed while there, and caught as many more, which he marked on the ear and let go. When his powder failed, he took them by speed of foot; for his way of living and continued

exercise of walking and running cleared him of all gross humours, so that he ran with wonderful swiftness thro' the woods and up the rocks and hills, as we perceived when we employed him to catch goats for us. We had a bulldog which we sent with several of our nimblest runners to help him in catching goats; but he distanced and tired both the dog and the men, caught the goats, and brought 'em to us on his back. He told us that his agility in pursuing a goat had once like to have cost him his life; he pursued it with so much eagerness, that he catched hold of it on the brink of a precipice, of which he was not aware, the bushes having hid it from him; so that he fell with the goat down the said precipice a great height, and was so stunned and bruised with the fall that he narrowly escaped with his life; and when he came to his senses, found the goat dead under him. He lay there about twenty-four hours, and was scarce able to crawl to his hut, which was about a mile distant, or to stir abroad again in ten days.

He came at last to relish his meat well enough without salt or bread, and in the season had plenty of good turnips, which had been sowed there by Capt. Dampier's men, and have now overspread some acres of ground. He had enough of good cabbage from the cabbage-trees, and seasoned his meat with the fruit of the pimento trees, which is the same as the Jamaica pepper, and smells deliciously.

He soon wore out all his shoes and clothes by running thro' the woods; and at last being forced to shift without them, his feet became so hard that he run everywhere without annoyance; and it was some time before he could wear shoes after we found him; for not being used to any so long, his feet swelled when he came first to wear them again.

After he had conquered his melancholy, he diverted himself sometimes by cutting his name on the trees, and the time of his being left and continuance there. He was at first much pestered with cats and rats, that had bred in great numbers from some of each species which had got ashore from ships that put in there to wood and water. The rats gnawed his feet and clothes while asleep, which obliged him to cherish the cats with his goats' flesh; by which many of them became so tame that they would lie about him in hundreds, and soon delivered him from the rats. He likewise tamed some kids, and to divert himself would now and then sing and dance with them and his cats; so that by the care of Providence and vigour of his youth, being now about thirty years old, he came at last to conquer all the inconveniences of his solitude and to be very easy. When his clothes wore out, he made himself a coat and cap of goatskins, which he stitched together with little thongs of the same that he cut with his knife. He had no other needle but a nail; and when his knife was wore to the back, he made others as well as he could of some iron hoops that were left ashore, which he beat thin and ground upon stones. Having some linen cloth by him, he sewed himself shirts with a nail, and stitched 'em with the worsted of his own stockings, which he pulled out on purpose. He had his last shirt on when we found him on the island.

At his first coming on board us, he had so much forgot his language for want of use, that

we could scarce understand him; for he seemed to speak his words by halves. We offered him a dram; but he would not touch it, having drank nothing but water since his being there, and 'twas some time before he could relish our victuals.

Such is the simple but interesting account of the discovery and rescue of Selkirk; and it was no doubt the reading of this which first inspired Defoe to plan his most famous literary conception, *Robinson Crusoe*.

Besides the two sailors mentioned previously as living alone on Juan Fernandez, there are others mentioned by other writers. Ringrose, in his account of the voyage of Captain Sharp, the buccaneer, mentions one man who was the only survivor of a wreck and who lived here quite alone for five years. Captain Dampier also tells of a Mosquito Indian left here by mistake, and remaining for three years, till rescued by Dampier in 1684. In Selkirk's case his exile was not without its advantages, for the ship he left was shortly afterwards lost and only a few of the crew escaped.

After Selkirk got over the melancholy feelings engendered by his loneliness at first, he seems to have become tolerably reconciled to his solitary condition; and as Captain Woodes Rogers quaintly observes: 'We may perceive by this story the truth of the maxim, that Necessity is the mother of Invention, since he found means to supply his wants in a very natural manner, so as to maintain his life, tho' not so conveniently, yet as effectually as we are able to do with the help of all our arts and society. It may likewise instruct us how much a plain and temperate way of living conduces to the health of the body and the vigour of the mind, both which we are apt to destroy by excess and plenty, especially of strong liquor, and the variety as well as the nature of our meat and drink; for this man, when he came to our ordinary method of diet and life, tho' he was sober enough, lost much of his strength and agility.'

With which highly sensible moral disquisition we will take leave of our gallant author and privateersman and the rescued 'Crusoe.'

## THE LOST DIAMONDS OF THE ORANGE RIVER.

### II.

TAKING some dried flesh, biscuits, and a bottle of water each, and each shouldering a rifle, Klaas and I started away at seven o'clock. The little beggar, who, I suppose, in his Bushman youth had wandered baboon-like over all this wild country till he knew it by heart, showed no sign of hesitation, but walked rapidly down hill to a deep gorge at the foot, that led half a mile or so into a huge mass of mountain that formed the north wall of the Orange River. This kloof must at some time or another have served as a conduit for mighty floods of water, for its bottom was everywhere strewn with boulders of titanic size and shape, torn from the cliff-walls above. It took us a long hour of the most laborious effort to surmount these impediments; and then, with torn hands and aching

legs, we went straight up a mountain whose roof-like sides consisted of masses of loose shale and shingle, over which we slipped and floundered slowly and with difficulty. I say we; but I am bound to admit that the Bushman made much lighter of his task than I, his ape-like form seeming, indeed, much more fitted for such a slippery break-neck pastime.

At length we reached the crest; and then, after passing through a fringe of bush and scrub, we scrambled down the thither descent, a descent of no little danger. The slipping shales that gave way at every step, often threatened, indeed, to hurl us headlong to the bottom. At last this stage was ended, and we found ourselves in a very valley of desolation. We were almost completely entombed by narrowing mountain walls, whose dark-red sides frowned upon us everywhere in horrid and overpowering silence. The sun was up, and the heat, shut in as we were, overpowering. Moreover, to make things more lively, I noticed that snakes were more than ordinarily plentiful, the bloated puff-adder, the yellow cobra, and the dangerous little night-adder, several times only just getting out of our path.

The awful silence of this sepulchral place was presently, as we rested for ten minutes, broken by a company of baboons, which, having espied us from their kraantes above, came shogglng down to see what we were. They were huge brutes and savage, and *quah-quahed* at us threateningly, till Klaas sent a bullet among them, when they retreated pell-mell. We soon started again, and pressed rapidly along a narrow gorge some fifty feet wide, with perfectly level precipitous walls, apparently worn smooth at their bases by the action of terrific torrents, probably an early development of the Orange River when first it made its way through these grim defiles. Presently the causeway narrowed still more; and then turning a sharp corner, we suddenly came upon a pair of leopards sauntering coolly towards us. I didn't like the look of things at all, for a leopard at the best of times is an ugly customer, even where he knows and dreads firearms. The brutes showed no intention of bolting, but stood with their hackles up, their tails waving ominously, and their gleaming teeth bared in fierce defiance. There was nothing for it—either we or they must retreat; and having come all this frightful *trek* for the diamonds, I felt in no mood to back down even to *Felis pardus* in his very nastiest mood. Looking to our rifles, we moved very quietly forward until within thirty-five yards of the grim cats. They were male and female, and two as magnificent specimens of their kind as sun ever shone upon. The male had now crouched flat for his charge, and not an instant was to be lost. The female stood apparently irresolute. Noticing this, and not having time to speak, we both let drive at the charging male. Both shots struck, but neither stopped him. The lady, hearing the report, and apparently not liking the look of affairs, incontinently fled. With a horrid throaty grunt, the male leopard flew across the sand, coming straight at me, and then launched himself into air. I fired too hurriedly my second barrel, and, for a wonder, clean missed, for in those days I seldom failed in stopping dangerous game; but these beggars are like lightning once they are charging. In a moment,

as the yellow form was flying through space straight at my head, I sprang to one side, and Klaas firing again, sent the leopard struggling to earth, battling frantically for life amid sand and shingle with a broken back. Lucky was the shot, and bravely fired, or I had probably been as good as dead. Klaas soon whipped the skin off the dead leopard and hid it under some stones; and we then proceeded, the whole affair having occupied but twenty minutes.

Another mile of this canal-like kloof brought us to a broad opening where the wall of mountain on our left stood up straight before the hot sunlight, a dark reddish-brown mass of rock, I suppose some five hundred feet in height, and then sloped away more smoothly to its summit, that overlooked the river, as I should judge, about a mile distant. As we came out into the sunshine, Klaas, pointing to the cliff, ejaculated in quite an excited way: 'The Pearl! the Pearl! Look sir, look.' Looking upwards at the mass of rock, my eye was suddenly arrested by a gleaming mass that protruded from the dead wall of mountain. Half dazzled, I shaded my eyes with my hand and looked again. It was a most strange and beautiful thing that I beheld, a freak of nature the most curious that I had ever set eyes on. The glittering mass was a huge egg-shaped ball of quartz of a semi-transparent milky hue, flashing and gleaming in the radiant sunshine with the glorious prismatic colours that flash from the unlucky opal. But yet more strange, above 'de Paarl,' as Klaas quaintly called it, and overhanging it, was a kind of canopy of stalactite of the same brilliant opalescent colours. It was wonderful! Klaas here began to caper and dance in the most fantastic fashion, and then suddenly ceasing, he said: 'Now, sieur, I will soon show you the diamonds—they are there,' pointing to a dark corner of the glen, 'right through the rock.'

'What made you call that shining stone up there "de Paarl"?' said I, as I gazed in admiration at the beautiful ball of crystal.

'Well, sieur, I was once with a wine Boer at the Paarl down in the old Colony, and a man told me why they called the mountain there "de Paarl;" and he told me, too, what the pretty gems were that I saw in the young *vrouw*'s best ring when she wore it; and I then knew what a pearl was, and that it came from a fish that grows in the sea. And I remembered then the great shining stone that I found up here when I was a boy on the Groot Rivier, and I thought to myself: "Ah, Klaas, that was the finest pearl ye ever saw, that up in the cliff near where the pretty white stones lay." I mean the diamonds yonder, sieur.'

At last, then, we were within grasp of the famous stones concerning whose reality I had even to the last had secret misgivings. It was a startling thought. Just beyond there, somewhere through the rock-walls, whose secret approach at present Klaas only knew, lay 'Sindbad's Valley.' Could it be true? Could I actually be within touch of riches unspeakable, riches in comparison with which the wealth of Croesus seemed but a beggar's hoard?

I sat down on a rock and lit a pipe, just to think it over and settle my rather highly strung nerves. The Paarl, as I could now see, was

a unique formation of crystal-spar, singularly rounded upon its face. It and the glorious canopy of hanging stalactite above it must have been reft bare by some mighty convulsion that had anciently torn asunder these mountains, leaving the ravine in which we stood.

As we drank from our water-bottles and ate some of the dried flesh and biscuits we had brought with us, I noticed Klaas's keen little eyes wandering inquiringly round the base of the precipice in our front. He seemed puzzled; and as we finished our repast and lit our pipes again, he said: 'The hole in the rock that leads from this kloof to the diamonds should be over there—pointing before him; 'but I can't quite make out the spot, the bushes have altered and grown so since I was here as a boy years and years ago.'

We got up and walked straight for the point he had indicated, and reached the foot of the precipice. The Bushman hunted hither and thither in the prickly jungle with the fierce rapidity of a tiger-cat; but, inasmuch as he was sometimes prevented from immediately approaching the rock-wall, he appeared unable to hit off the tunnel that led, as he had formerly told me, to the valley beyond. Suddenly, after he had again disappeared, he gave a low whistle; a signal to approach, to which I quickly responded. Quietly pushing my way towards him, I was astonished to see within a small clearing a thick and high thorn-fence, outside of which Klaas stood. Inside this circular kraal was a low round hut, formed of boughs and branches strongly and closely interlaced. Klaas was standing watching intently the interior of the hut, which seemed to be barred at its tiny entrance by a pile of thorns lying close against it.

What could it mean, this strange dwelling, inaccessible as it seemed to human life? Klaas soon found a weak spot in the kraal fence, and pulling down some thorns, we stepped inside and approached the hut. Here, too, Klaas pulled away the dry mimosa-thorns from the entrance, and was at once confronted by a tiny bow and arrow, and behind that by a fierce little weazened face. Instantly, my Bushman poured forth a torrent of his own language, redundant beyond expression with those extraordinary clicks of which the Bushman tongue seems mainly to consist. Even as he spoke, the bow and arrow were lowered, the little head appeared through the entrance, and the tiniest, quaintest, most ancient figure of a man I had ever beheld stood before us. Ancient, did I say? Ancient is hardly a meet description of his aspect. As he stood there blinking like an owl in the fierce sunlight, his only covering a little skin *kaross* of the red rhe-bok fastened over his shoulders, he looked indeed coeval with the rocks around him. I never saw anything like it. Poor little oddity, dim though his eyes were waxing, feeble though his shrivelled arm, dulled though his formerly acute senses, he had, with all the desperate pluck of his race, been prepared to do battle for his hearth and home!

In his own tongue, Klaas interrogated this antediluvian Bushman, and then suddenly, as he was answered by the word 'Ariseep,' a light flashed across his countenance. Seizing his aged countryman by the shoulders, he turned him round and carefully examined his back. Lifting the skin

*kaross* and rubbing away the coating of grease and dirt that covered the right shoulder, Klaas pointed to two round white scars just below the blade-bone, several inches apart. Then he gave a leap into the air, seized the old fossil by the neck, and shrieked into his ears the most wonderful torrent of Bushman language I have ever heard. In his turn the old man started back, examined Klaas intently from head to foot, and in a thin pipe jabbered at him almost as volubly.

Finally, Klaas enlightened me as to this comical interlude. It seemed incredible; but this old man, 'Ariseep by name, was his grandfather, whom he had not set eyes on since long years before the Boer *commando* had broken into his tribal fastness, slain his father and mother and other relatives, and carried himself off captive. The old man before us had somehow escaped in the fight, had crept away; and after years of solitary hiding in the mountains around, had somehow penetrated to this grim and desolate valley, where he had subsisted on Bushman fare—snakes, lizards, roots, gum, bulbs, fruit, and an occasional snared buck or rock-rabbit: these and a little rill of water that gushed from the mountain side hard by supplied him with existence. Here he had lingered for many years, alone and isolated.

After nearly an hour's incessant chatter, during which I believe Klaas had laid before his monkey-like ancestor an epitomised history of his life, he told the old man we wished to get through the mountain, and that he had lost the tunnel of which he had known as a boy. 'Ariseep, who, it seems, in the years he had been there had explored every nook and cranny of the valley, knew at once what he meant, and quickly pointed out to us, not one hundred paces away, a dense and prickly mass of cactus and euphorbia bush. Here, after half an hour's hewing and slashing with our hunting-knives, we managed to open a pathway; and at last a cave-like opening in the mountain, about seven feet in diameter, lay before us. The old man, however, gave us warning that snakes abounded, and might not impossibly be encountered in the twenty minutes' crawl which, as Klaas had told me, it would take to get through. This opinion was not of a nature to fortify me in the undertaking, yet, rather than leave the diamonds unexplored, I felt prepared to brave the terrors of this uncanny passage.

It was now three o'clock; the sun was marching steadily across the brassy firmament on his eastward trek, and we had no time to lose.

'In you go, Klaas,' said I; and, nothing loth, Klaas dived into the bowels of the mountains, I at his heels. For five minutes, by dint of stooping and an occasional hands-and-knees creep upon the flooring of the tunnel, sometimes on smooth sand, sometimes over protruding rock and rough gravel, we got along very comfortably. Then the roof of the dark avenue—for it was pitch dark now—suddenly lowered, and we had to crawl along. It was unpleasant, I can tell you, boxed up like this beneath the heart of the mountain. The very thought seemed to make the oppression a million times more oppressive. Even Klaas, plucky Bushman though he was, didn't seem to relish the adventure, and spoke in a subdued and awe-stricken whisper. Sometimes since, as I have thought of that most gruesome passage, I have burst into a sweat nearly as profuse, though not

so painful as I endured that day. At last, after what seemed to me hours and hours of this painful crawling and Egyptian gloom, we met a breath of fresher air; the tunnel widened and heightened, and in another five minutes we emerged into the blessed sunlight. Little Klaas looked pretty well 'baked,' even in his old leather *crackers* (leather trousers) and flannel shirt. As for myself, I was literally streaming; every thread on me was as wet as if I had plunged into a river. We lay panting for a while upon the scorching rocks, and then sat up and looked about us.

If the Paarl Kloof, as Klaas called it, whence we had just come had been sufficiently striking, the mighty amphitheatre in which we lay was infinitely more amazing. Imagine a vast arena almost completely circular in shape, flat and smooth, and composed, as to its flooring, of intermingled sand and gravel reddish yellow in colour. This arena was surrounded by stupendous walls of the same ruddy-brown rock we had noticed in Paarl Kloof, which here towered to a height of close on a thousand feet. In the centre of the red cliffs, blazing forth in splendour, ran a broad band of the most glorious opalescent rock-crystal, which flashed out its rays of coloured light as if to meet the fiery kisses of the sun. This flaming girdle of crystal, more beautiful a thousand times than the most gorgeous opal, the sheen of a fresh-caught mackerel, or the most radiant mother-of-pearl, I can only compare in splendour to the flashing rainbows formed over the foaming falls of the Zambezi, which I have seen more than once. It ran horizontally and very evenly round at least two-thirds of the cliff-belt that encircled us. It was a wonderful, an amazing spectacle, and I think quite the most singular of the many strange things (and they are not few) I have seen in the African interior.

Well, we sat gazing at this crystal rainbow for many minutes, till I had somewhat feasted my enraptured gaze. Then we got up, and at once began the search for diamonds. Directly I saw the gravel, especially where it had been cleansed in the shallow channels by the action of rain and flood, I knew at once we should find 'stones': it resembled almost exactly the gravel found in the Vaal River diggings, and was here and there strongly ferruginous and mingled with red sand, and occasionally lime. I noticed quickly that agates, jaspers, and chalcedony were distributed pretty thickly, and that occasionally the curious *band-doom* stone, so often found in the Vaal River with diamonds, and indeed often considered by diggers as a sure indicator of 'stones,' was to be met with. In many places the pebbles were washed perfectly clean, and lay thickly piled in hollow water-ways. Here we speedily found a rich harvest of the precious gems. In a feverish search of an hour and a half, Klaas and I picked up thirty-three fine stones, ranging in size from a small pigeon's egg to a third of the size of my little finger-nail. They were all fine diamonds, some few, it is true, yellow or straw coloured, others of purest water, as I afterwards learned; and we had no difficulty in finding them, although we wandered over not a twentieth part of the valley. I could see at once from this off-hand search that enormous riches lay spread here upon the surface of the earth; beneath, probably was contained fabulous wealth. I was puzzled at

the time, and I have never had inclination or opportunity to solve the mystery since, to account for the presence of diamonds in such profusion. Whether they were swept into the valley by early floodings of the Orange River through some aperture that existed formerly, but had been closed by volcanic action; or whether, as I am inclined to think, the whole amphitheatre is a vast upheaval from subterraneous fires of a bygone period, is to this hour an unfathomed secret. I rather incline to the latter theory, and believe that, like the Kimberley 'pipe,' as diggers call it, the diamondiferous earth had been shot upwards funnel-wise from below, and that ages of floods and rain-washing had cleansed and left bare the gravel and stones I had seen upon the surface.

From the search we had had, I made no doubt that a fortnight's careful hunting in this valley would make me a millionaire, or something very like it. At length I was satisfied; and as the easterly sun was fast stooping to his couch, with a light heart and elastic step I turned with Klaas to depart. The excitement of the 'find' had quite banished the remembrance of that awful tunnel-passage so recently encountered.

'We'll go back now, Klaas,' said I, 'sleep in your grandfather's kraal, and get to the wagon first thing in the morning.'

At half-past five we again entered the tunnel. It was a nasty business, when one thought of it again, but it would soon be over. As before, Klaas went first, and for half the distance all went well. Suddenly, as we came to a sandy part of the tunnel, there was a scuffle in front, a fierce exclamation in Bushman language, and then Klaas called out in a hoarse voice: 'A snake has bitten me!' What a situation! Cooped up in this frightful burrow, face to face with probably a deadly snake, which had already bitten my companion. Almost immediately, Klaas's voice came back to me in a hoarse guttural whisper: 'I have him by the neck, sieur: it is a puff-adder, and his teeth are sticking into my shoulder. If you will creep up and lay hold of his tail, which is on your side of me, we can settle him; but I can't get his teeth out without your help.'

Crawling forwards, and feeling my way with right-numbed fingers, I touched Klaas's leg; then softly moving my left hand, I was suddenly smitten by a horrible writhing tail. I seized it with both hands, and finally gripped the horrid reptile, which I felt to be swollen with rage, as is the brute's habit, in an iron grasp with both hands. Then I felt, in the black darkness, that Klaas took a fresh grip of the loathsome creature's neck, and, with an effort, disengaged the deadly fangs from his shoulder. Immediately, I felt him draw his knife, and, after a struggle, sever the serpent's head from its body. The head he pushed away to the right as far out of our course as possible; and then I dragged the writhing body from him, and shuddering, cast it behind me as far as possible.

At that moment I thought that for the first time in my life I must have swooned. But quickly I bethought me of poor faithful Klaas, sore stricken; and I called to him in as cheerful a voice as I could muster: 'Get forward, Klaas, for your life as hard as you can, and, please God, we'll pull you through.' Never had I admired the Bushman's fierce courage more than now.

Most men would have sunk upon the sand and given up life and hope. Not so this aboriginal. 'Ja, sieur ; I will loup,' was all he said.

Then we scrambled onward, occasionally halting as the deadly sickness overtook Klaas. At last the light came, and as my poor Bushman grew feebler and more slow, I found room to pass him, and so dragged him behind me to the opening. Here I propped him for a moment on the sand outside with his back to the mountain, and loudly called 'Ariseep !' while I got breath for a moment.

The sun was sinking in blood-red splendour behind the mountains, and the kloof and rock-walls were literally aglow with the parting blush of day. Nature looked calm and serenely beautiful, and hushed in a splendour that ill accorded with the agitating scene there at the mouth of the tunnel. All this flashed across me as I called for the old man. Klaas was now breathing heavily, and getting dull and stupefied. I took him in my arms and carried him to 'Ariseep's kraal, whence the old man was just emerging. At sight of his grandfather, Klaas rallied, and rapidly told him what had happened ; and the old man at once plunged into his hut for something. Then Klaas's eyelids drooped, and he became drowsy and almost senseless. In vain I roused him, and tried to make him walk, and so stay the baleful effects of the poison, now running riot in his blood. He was too far gone. 'Ariseep now reappeared with a small skin-bag, out of which he took some dirty-looking powder. With an old knife he scored the skin and flesh around Klaas's wound, and then rubbed in the powder. I had no brandy or ammonia to administer, and therefore let the old Bushman pursue his remedy, though I felt somehow it would be useless. So it proved ; either the antidote, with which I believe Bushmen often do effect wonderful cures, was stale and ineffectual, or the poison had got too strong a hold. My poor Klaas never became conscious again, though I fancied eagerly that he recognised me before he died, for his lips moved as he turned to me once. At last, within an hour and a half from the time he was bitten, he lay dead.

So perished my faithful and devoted henchman, the stoutest, truest, bravest soul that ever African sun shone upon. We placed him gently in a deep sandy hollow, and over the sand piled heavy stones to keep the vermin from him. Then laying myself within 'Ariseep's kraal, I waited for the slothful dawn. As it came, I rose, called 'Ariseep from his hut, and bade farewell to him as best I could, for we neither of us understood one another. I noticed, by-the-bye, that no sign of grief seemed to trouble the old man. Probably he was too aged, and had seen too much of death to think much about the matter.

The rest of my story is soon finished. I made my way back to camp, told my men what had happened, and, indeed, took some of them back with me to Klaas's grave, and made them exhume his body, to satisfy themselves of the cause of death ; for these men are sometimes very suspicious. Then we covered him again securely against wandering beasts and birds.

I trekked back to the old Colony, sold off my things, and went home. The diamonds I had brought away realised in England twenty-two thousand pounds. I have never dreamt of going

to the fatal valley again. Nothing on earth would tempt me, after that ill-starred journey, heavy with the fate of Klaas and the Bechuana boy Amazi. As for the tunnel, I would not venture once more into its recesses for all the diamonds in Africa, even if they lay piled in heaps at the other end of it. Part of the twenty-two thousand pounds I invested for some relatives ; the balance that I kept, sufficed, with what I already possessed, for all possible wants of my own. Then I came back to my dearly loved South Africa for the last time ; and a few years later made the journey to the Chobe River, from which you rescued me in the thirst-land.'

Such was the story related to us by the transport rider. Our narrator wound up by telling us that Mowbray had further imparted to him the exact locality of the diamond valley ; but he added : 'I have never yet been there, nor do I think that for the present it is likely I shall. Some day, before I leave the Cape, I *may* have a try, and trek down the Orange River ; but I don't feel very keen about that secret passage, after poor Mowbray's experiences.'

#### A BORROWED ART.

THE grandest of our modern pageants, the Queen's triumphal procession to Westminster in the summer of Jubilee year, is already regarded very generally as mere matter of history ; but those fortunate ones who can recall the event as a personal reminiscence will readily allow that among the minor attractions of the princely following, perhaps none exceeded in interest the group of native Indian princes. Calmly and impressively they moved onwards, their gorgeous Eastern attire, richly coloured and sparkling with jewels, contrasting sharply with the manly martial dress of Europe's royal sons. Yet was there to the thoughtful something impressive in the very fidelity of those native princes to the traditions of their forefathers. It is well that in life's seething, rushing current there should be here and there still stretches of back-water, where the tides and the winds scarce have power 'to make or break or work their will.' Such, to the feverish progress of the West, is Eastern conservatism. There, what has been, is ; and looking at the dazzlingly arrayed figures of June 1887, one's thought easily pictured Herod Agrippa as for the last time, long, long ago, he stood forth in the sight of his people clothed in a silver robe 'of a contexture,' as Josephus tells us, 'truly wonderful.'

But to return to our subject. Perhaps the owners of those cunningly woven, gorgeously embroidered state robes would have been more than a little surprised had they known that here, in the far-off western island, there existed almost within hail a factory devoted entirely to the manufacture of a thoroughly Hindu speciality—gold and silver thread. Within six miles of London Bridge it lies, a quaint, old-world, brick and timber building, with high walls and a calm broad belt of water to shut off the busy city

world, and a rushing stream to drown the din and turmoil of the 'madding crowd.'

Perhaps some of our readers may be interested to learn how silver bars can be transformed into gold thread. In the first place, the silver is brought from the Bank of England in cakes, weighing about one thousand ounces. To secure the necessary degree of tenacity, a certain proportion of copper is added, and the alloyed metal, in the form of cylindrical bars, is next thoroughly heated. The hammering process follows; and the bars—originally about two feet in length and two inches in diameter, but now half as long again, and proportionately thinner—are in the next place filed and rubbed until their surfaces are perfectly even. What we may call the second part of the process begins with the laying on of leaf after leaf of gold in the proportion of two per cent. Afterwards, each bar is wrapped in paper and well heated in a charcoal fire. A sort of vice stands ready; and in it, bar after bar as it comes from the fire is fixed and thoroughly burnished. All trace of its silver original has now disappeared, and the bar is ready for conversion into wire. This is accomplished by drawing it from one hundred to one hundred and fifty times through ever-diminishing holes in steel plates; and finally, when the capabilities of this metal have been exhausted, through apertures in diamonds, rubies, or sapphires. The delicate wire thus obtained must now be passed through the steel rollers of one of Herr Krupp's little 'flattening-mills.' This brings us to the final process—the spinning of the flattened wire round silk, to form the golden thread of commerce. These spinning-machines are worked by water, although two steam-engines are to be found in the factory; for water-power is considered to be more regular and even in its action. There is a small home demand for the round wire for the adornment of epaulets, &c.; but the bulk of the manufactured article finds its way in the shape of silky gold thread to India and the far East generally, where it is converted by skilled native labour into those gorgeous cloths and tissues in which the heart of the Oriental delights.

Have we not here a striking illustration of the superiority of Western thought and enterprise over that of the soft luxurious East? By the aid of machinery and improved methods of working, we are enabled to compete with our Hindu fellow-subjects in one of their specialities despite the difficulties of transit, to say nothing of the expense of transporting goods so great a distance. However surprising the fact, we cease to wonder at it, after being assured that the Hindu with his manual process can only extract eight hundred yards of wire from a piece of silver the size of a florin, which would yield our manufacturers sixteen hundred yards.

What a wonderful property does gold possess in its malleability! It is asserted that every ounce of the bars whose fortunes we have followed with no little interest, each containing only two per cent. of gold, will run to the length of from five hundred to two thousand five hundred yards; and the amazing figure of five thousand yards is on record. This latter thread would be finer than human hair; but the extreme limit is not even yet reached.

There is a tradition telling how an attempt was

once made to produce a wire fine enough for use in a transit instrument. A solid gold wire was drawn by means of a copper cylinder to the length of twenty thousand feet to the ounce; but at that point the shadow of a thread fell to pieces, and the astronomer was obliged to resort to his usual spider's web.

One word as to the history of this unique manufacture. It boasts great antiquity, for the ancient Jewish records make mention of 'apparel of wrought gold,' which was probably identical with the *soneri* or golden stuff of the Hindus. The East was its early and for a long time its only nursery. At length the art found its way to the Continent; and in 1753 a London journal commented on the long-established superiority of the brocade made with the help of gold wire in France. Our neighbours across the Channel kept the secret so well of preparing perforated plates, that for many years we were unable to enter into successful competition with them. British pluck and enterprise, however, succeeded finally in surmounting the difficulty. Plates of the regulation 'mixt metal' were obtained, despite the penalty of capital punishment attached to their exportation, and the peculiar composition of them was studied and copied, until England was enabled to add to her long list of manufactures that of gold wire-drawing, which, besides its utility and interesting process, is worthy of note as one of the few remaining commercial links between the busy world of to-day and the dim ages of antiquity.

#### THE MAN WHO SWALLOWED THE EAST WIND.

THE well-known story of the two boys who, under the cognomen of 'Eyes and No Eyes,' went out for a walk, in which the one saw nothing worthy of record, while the other saw a great deal both to amuse and interest him, is a good deal older than *Sandford and Merton*, where most of us read it in the old days of long ago. No doubt, 'it is,' as we say, 'as old as the hills'—though, wise men have not yet quite settled how old *they* are—and as true as such proverbs usually are. For, as a general rule, the eye sees only what it wishes to see or cares to see; and there are 'none so blind as those who won't see,' and then, perversely enough, try to comfort themselves with another old saying, 'What the eye sees not, the heart doesn't crave.'

I had been reading an odd volume of Danish proverbs about Eyes and No Eyes, as it chanced, one day in October, just before setting out for a ramble through the woods; and as I wandered on down one of the grassy roads, I suddenly came upon a couple of squirrels at play—a downright game of frisking romp. The carpet under my feet was soft and thick—

Golden and red, purple and brown,  
Lightly the woodland leaves came down,  
Fluttering here and whirling there  
All in the hazy ambient air;

so that not a footfall could be heard, and I could watch the two little merry sprites by simply getting under the boughs of a great copper beech and standing still, without a chance of detection. And so there I stood for some minutes; and such a game of fun I never before saw. The

two imps were like kittens gone mad ; they ran races after each other, up one side of a tree and down another ; they grinned, they chattered ; they took flying leaps from bough to bough ; they came down headlong on the piles of leaves with a dash and a hurry and a scramble that sent the small birds flying in all directions. Then they would perch gravely opposite to each other on the green grass, as if on the watch as to which should be the first to begin again their happy frolic. But all at once, as I made up my mind that I was still unseen, a fir-cone fell headlong down from a tall tree, and in a trice they had utterly vanished.

It was a day of dead sultry calm ; and as I watched and listened, there fell on me an air of intense stillness and silence that seemed to fill all the wood. Right and left of me, on every side, were dense masses of trees—tall feathery silver birch ; broad spreading beeches, with smooth, solemn, massive trunks ; sturdy knotted yews, looking as if they had stood there for centuries ; strong mighty oaks, with gnarled and twisted stems that stretched across the winding pathway, as if on guard over the quiet domain. Some of them I knew well ; for I had seen them in all weathers ; and again and again found shelter from rain or sun under their spreading boughs. They seemed like old friends, who betray no trust ; even in winter staunch and true, as if standing and waiting in patience and in hope for the far-off but sure days of spring, the time of new life and light ; living and dying without suffering or self-reproach ; and 'gifted with the divine gift of silence,' which, according to a modern sage, is the most eloquent of all speech, for those who can hear it, when 'The Book of Nature getteth short of leaves.'

But however 'golden' such silence may be, and however divine the prophet of Cheyne Row, this one of woodland voices was, like all other mortal dreams, brought suddenly to an end. All at once, not a hundred yards away, there came pounding along over the dead leaves a little old man in a long gray coat ; with his hat pulled down over his eyes, and a stout ash-plant in his hand, with which he slashed vigorously right and left among the briars and nettles. It was old Elzie Bartle, a strange odd creature, who lived in lonely cottage at the end of the village, and spent most of his time in minding other people's business. Business of his own he seemed to have none ; and the neighbours knew no more as to who or what he was than they did when he came among them, a stranger, twenty years ago. He had money enough to pay his way and keep out of debt ; was without encumbrances of any kind, and seemed to have neither relatives nor friends that ever cared to write to or visit him. Jacob the postman affirms to this day that no letter ever came to him by post but a circular from the surveyor of taxes at the county town. The moment I set eyes on him in the wood, I went back to my book of Danish proverbs, and to one particular line therein which said, 'Some there are who see ill, and wouldn't mind seeing worse ;' and there before me was the very man whom the words fitted to a T.

'Well, Squire,' said the old man, as he came up, 'here's a day for October ! A regular, sweltering, mouldy sort of day, I call it ; enough

to breed a fever all over the place. No wonder there's two more cases of measles down at the keeper's ; not the two boys that got bitten by the sheep-dog last week, but girls this time ; a poor sickly lot ! and no wonder, with such a mother.'

'Such a mother?' said I. 'Why, what's the matter with the mother?—as clean, tidy, hard-working a woman as you'll find in a day's march.'

'Nonsense, Squire—non-sense ! They sell gin, now, up at Murridge's the draper, and if Mrs Gaiters isn't one of his best customers, my name isn't Bartle. No, no ; I know what I know, Squire, though I don't want it to go any further.'

'You had better not let it get as far as her husband's ears, Elzie, or he might tumble you into the horse-pond and not help you out again. It's deep, Bartle, and muddy too.'

'No doubt, Squire, no doubt ; but, as I was saying when you interrupted me, I know what I know, though you needn't let it go any further. Mrs Gaiters is a good customer at Murridge's ; and it was only yesterday I saw her coming out of his shop with a round bundle under her arm that looked as much like a bottle as it could, as I said to Jane Ripper, when I saw her going down the street.—And that reminds me, Squire, of the nasty drain at the corner. They've got it open again, and I've not met with a worse stench for weeks until just now, before I saw you, I came upon a polecat or a weasel or something of the sort, lying dead in the middle of the path, and enough to poison the whole wood.'

'Well, Elzie,' said I, 'they must open the drain to clear it out ; and as for the polecat, he must die somewhere ; and as he has got no relations to bury him, he must lie there until the ants pick his bones clean for him.—But never mind the drains or polecats this glorious afternoon. Come here, man, and look down that narrow green path, right on past the great clump of white clematis, up to where the sunshine is streaming through the black evergreen oak, and lighting up the copper beech, and the cluster of red berries on the spindle-tree, as if they were on fire.'

'Yes, yes,' replied the old man ; 'I see it.—And talking of fire, it was just at this very corner that I caught two of Harris's boys, yesterday, making a fire of bits of furze and a broken hurdle, enough to set the whole copse in a blaze. There ; you can see the ashes of it now ; and there's a page out of a spelling-book, too, as I live—torn out of one of the school-books, I'll wager—the mischievous young wretches !—But it's all the same wherever you go ; nothing but waste and extravagance. All the labourers crying out about low wages and starvation times ; and if you believe me, when I went in to Hobbs's cottage last Thursday at five o'clock, just to tell him that one of his boys had been caught with his pockets full in Jackson's orchard, there they were, the whole seven of 'em, eating hot buttered toast !—"You seem to be enjoying yourselves," said I, "and butter at one-and-three!"—And if you believe me, Squire, they all burst out laughing at this ; and "Right you are, Bartle," says old Hobbs, with his mouth full of toast—"right you are ; and why shouldn't we ?—Will 'ee have a piece?"—"No," said I ; "I can't afford to eat melted butter in these times ; and

if your boy isn't laid up to-morrow, after gorging himself with sour apples, let me know."—"Well, Bartle, we'll be sure to let you know; and we'll tell old Bolus to send in his bill to you."—"There, Squire; that's the way they waste their money; and if that boy doesn't get a month on the treadmill before long, my name isn't Bartle, that's all."

By this time we had got to the edge of the wood and were turning down into the lane; and as I had had more than enough of the old grumbler, I made up my mind to get rid of him. "Good-night, Bartle," said I—"good-night."—For God's sake, don't bother yourself any more about old Hobbs and his boys. He is a hard-working, steady fellow enough, and good to his wife too. And as for the apples, the boy only got a couple after all—so Jackson told me—and a good rope's ending into the bargain."

And so, at last, after a final grumble about Hobbs's mother-in-law and a pair of shoes which she had got at Murridge's and never paid for, we shook hands and parted; he across the meadow down to his own cottage, and I sauntering on into the village. And here I fell in with another of our old men, of totally different look, manner, and speech—Jim Samson the blacksmith; a sturdy well-built fellow of sixty, with a sun-burnt smutty face, and a pair of sharp gray eyes that brimmed over with fun. His day's work was over; he had shut up his forge, and was just going home to tea.

"Servant, sir," says Samson. "Hope you're pretty well, sir, after a dose of Elzie? I see you a-coming down the copse together, and I says to myself: "Squire's a-catchin' of it now, and no mistake." Old Bartle's bin on the rampage all the marning, and ready to bust about that there drain up street."

"Well, Samson," said I, "I've had a dose this time, and a good one too."

"Knowed you had, Squire, the minute I saw your face. Why, bliss 'ee, flesh and blood can't stand it. It's my belief, Squire, that there old chap "have a-swallowed the East wind," and it haven't agreed with un. He've a-got the best eye for dirt of any chap I ever set eyes on."

"Swallowed the East wind?" said I. "Why so, Samson?"

"Why, how else could he go on as he do? From marning to night, from one week's end to another, it's nothing but grumble, fidget, and growl. First, it's the dreadful accidents, the fires, and the murders; then it's the fever and the riots in Ireland; the paupers, the gaols, and the strikes. Everything's going wrong, and there's no good news anywhere.—Why, bless 'ee, he come into my forge the other marning, and what's he do but begin foraging about among my tools and putting 'em to rights; making 'em tidy, he says, and upsetting things to that degree that every bit o' fire went out of the coals and put me all of a cold sweat."—"Be off, Bartle!" I says at last. "Get away out into the sunshine there and take a good drink o' that, and see if you can't clear all them cobwebs out of your brains." And with that, Squire, away he goes out of the place like a mad March hare!"

"Well done, Samson!" said I—"well done! If he would but take your advice, that wretched old croaker would be a different man in a month,

instead of a nuisance to himself and all his neighbours.—Good-night, Samson.—How's the wind?"—"West, sir—west to everybody in the place but old Bartle.—But he keeps his own weather-cock, he do, and it's nothin' but "East-by-north-east," and dirty weather. It's a pity such people was ever born."

As I wended my way home through the wood and watched the soft mellow sunshine glinting down among the tall trunks of ruddy beech, and lighting up the green pathways with patches of golden splendour, it seemed a pity indeed that such miserable failures as old Elzie should exist to mar the beauty and peace of the whole scene. The smith's words were true words: it does seem a mistake that "such people ever was born." Perhaps, in his heart that miserable old bachelor himself inclines to the same way of thinking at times, and he, too, imagines that the world would have been better without him. If so, and he should feel tempted to write his own epitaph, I can save him from all further trouble on that score, in the words of a wise man and a wit of some two thousand years ago (*Epicharmus, Epigrammata Graeca*):

At seventy winters' end I died,  
A cheerless being, sole and sad.  
The nuptial knot I never tied,  
And wish my father never had.

#### WITHIN THE VEIL.

I CANNOT hear thy beating heart;  
How strangely still the pulsing vein;  
Closed are the eyes—those starlets twain;  
I call; but all my words are vain;  
Comes now no answer back again,  
For cold and dead, dear love, thou art!  
Yet hast thou joy, and not the smart:  
Thou dost not feel my tender pain;  
Thine eyes distil no tearful rain;  
And thou with sorrow hast no part.

Come in the silent night to me;  
Come when the morning spreads her ray;  
Come in the evening calm and gray;  
Come from the bright land far away,  
Where hearts are glad and moments gay;  
Come with thy footprint light and free;  
Come with thy tongue's sweet melody;  
And stay, love, by the ingle stay.  
I wait, love, for the coming day,  
The re-uniting hour with thee!

Where is thy brightsome dwelling now?  
Art thou, love, in the solar beam?  
Hear I thy voice in singing stream,  
Or Melody's diviner theme?  
Will eye meet eye in slumber's dream?  
Behold thine eyes the winter's snow?  
Or wend, dost thou, where flowers grow,  
And light illumines eternal day?  
Or leavest thou its brightsome ray,  
To follow whereso'er I go?

J. F. HUNT.

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